

Sonate

für Viola und Klavier op. 117 (1948)

Ernst Krenek
(1900–1991)

I

Andante (♩ = 72)

Viola

p eguale e calmo *simile*

Piano

p dolce

mf *p* *mf* *f*

10

II

Allegro vivace (♩.:120)

First system of musical notation. It consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music is in 6/8 time. The upper staff begins with a dynamic marking of *f feroce*. The lower staff has a first ending bracket with a '2' above it. Dynamic markings include *ff*, *p*, and *f*.

Second system of musical notation. The upper staff starts with a *pizz.* marking and a *ff* dynamic. It includes a circled number '10' above a measure. The lower staff has a *f* dynamic. The system concludes with an *arco* marking and a *f* dynamic.

Third system of musical notation. The upper staff features a *ff* dynamic. The lower staff has a circled number '20' above a measure and a *f* dynamic. The system ends with a *f* dynamic.

Fourth system of musical notation. The upper staff begins with a *ff* dynamic. The lower staff has a *ff* dynamic followed by a *mf* dynamic. The system concludes with a *f* dynamic.

III

Andantino (♩:84)

The first system of music consists of a piano staff and a grand staff. The piano staff begins with a dynamic marking of *p* and features a melodic line with slurs and ties. The grand staff provides harmonic accompaniment, with dynamics *p* and *mf* indicated. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

The second system continues the piece. The piano staff includes dynamic markings of *mf*, *p*, and *scherzando*. A circled measure number '10' is placed above the piano staff. The grand staff accompaniment includes dynamics *mp* and *scherzando*. The key signature changes to two sharps (F# and C#).

The third system features dynamics *p* and *mp* in both staves. A circled measure number '20' is located above the piano staff. The grand staff accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of *p*. The key signature changes to one sharp (F#).

The fourth system concludes the page with dynamics *p* and *mf*. The piano staff has a dynamic marking of *mf* in the latter half. The grand staff accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of *mf*. The key signature changes to two sharps (F# and C#).

Vorwort

Ernst Krenek komponierte seine *Sonate für Viola und Klavier* op. 117 im Dezember 1948 an seinem Wohnort in Los Angeles, Kalifornien. Erstaunlicherweise vollendete er das Werk in einer Zeitspanne von nur vier Tagen; er widmete es dem Violinisten Ferenc Molnar und der Pianistin Jane Hohfeld – beide waren auch die Interpreten der Uraufführung des Werkes im März 1949 in San Francisco.

Die Thematik der dodekaphonen und seriellen Musik begleitete Krenek fast während seines gesamten kompositorischen Schaffens. Mit dem langsamen Abgehen von den gebräuchlichen Zwölf-Ton-Prinzipien – so, wie Arnold Schönberg und seine Schüler sie entwickelt hatten – und anschließend in seinem aus dem Jahr 1933 stammenden *Karl V.*, einem Höhepunkt seines Operschaffens, festigte Krenek seine eigene Neuinterpretation der seriellen Komposition. Diese neue Technik wurde mit einem Prinzip umgesetzt, das Krenek als „Reihenrotation“¹ bezeichnete und das auch in einigen seiner späteren Werke anzutreffen ist; sie findet in seinem a cappella Choralwerk *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae* op. 43 von 1941/42 ihren Höhepunkt. In den späten 1940ern fand Krenek dann zu einer freieren atonalen/seriellen Technik, die auch in der *Sonate für Viola und Klavier* op. 117 anzutreffen ist.

Die in drei Sätze gegliederte Sonate ist kurz und einfallsreich, wird aber dennoch dem emotionalen Gewicht, das diese Form erfordert, gerecht. Der Violinist Michael Mann – Sohn des berühmten Autors Thomas Mann – hatte eine besondere Beziehung zu dieser Sonate. Er führte sie häufig in den USA und Europa auf, oftmals in Verbindung mit der ebenso fortschrittlich komponierten *Sonate für Viola* op. 92 Nr. 3. Gemeinsam mit der zunächst unveröffentlichten *Sonatine für Flöte und Viola* op. 92 Nr. 2a sind diese Werke Kreneks eine willkommene Bereicherung für das Repertoire von Kompositionen für Solo-Bratsche aus dem 20. Jahrhundert.

Brett Banducci
Los Angeles, 2009

1) Ernst Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, University of California Press 1974

Preface

Ernst Krenek composed his *Sonata for Viola and Piano* Op. 117 in December of 1948, while residing in Los Angeles, California. Astonishingly, the work was completed in a span of just four days, and dedicated to violist Ferenc Molnar and pianist Jane Hohfeld – who gave the premiere of the work in San Francisco in March 1949.

Krenek's journey with the serial idiom lasted almost his entire career. Beginning with his departure from customary twelve-tone principles – as invented by Arnold Schoenberg and his disciples – and following his 1933 operatic masterpiece *Karl V*, Krenek solidified his new interpretation of serial composition technique. This new technique, which implemented a procedure he called 'row rotation'¹, would be employed through many of his works and culminate in his 1941/42 a cappella choral masterpiece *Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae* Op. 43. By the late 1940's Krenek would utilize a more free atonal/serial technique, which can be found in the *Sonata for Viola and Piano* Op. 117.

Cast in three movements the sonata is brief and inventive, while still able to hold the emotional weight that the form demands. Violist Michael Mann – son of the renowned author Thomas Mann – took an affinity to the sonata. He performed it frequently in the United States and Europe, many times alongside the enlightened *Sonata for Viola* Op. 92 no. 3. Along with the previously unpublished *Sonatina for Flute and Viola* Op. 92 no. 2a, Krenek's works are an enriched and welcomed addition to the repertoire of 20th century compositions for viola.

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1) Ernst Krenek, *Horizons Circled*, University of California Press 1974